
Blighted Property Review Committee
Thursday, June 5, 2025
Hybrid Meeting / Council Chambers
Determination Hearing
Meeting Report

Mr. Keith called the Determination Hearing to order at 6:01 pm. He announced that a quorum was present.

BPRC Attendance: J. Keith, A. Woodward, C. Miller – in person and A. Boyd - virtually

Staff Attendance: H. Scheuring, M. Mayfield, Esq and L. Kelleher – in person

Mr. Keith asked the Board to consider the April minutes that were distributed electronically and this agenda.

Ms. Woodward moved, seconded by Mr. Miller, to approve the minutes from the April Certification Hearing as distributed and the agenda for this hearing. The motion was approved by acclamation.

PROPERTIES TO BE REMOVED FROM THE PROCESS

None

Mr. Keith explained the purpose of the BPRC process. Ms. Mayfield stated that due to the high number of people representing properties at this hearing the 5-minute speaking limitation listed on the agenda will be enforced.

DETERMINATION HEARING

Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Ms. Scheuring. Ms. Kelleher stated that Ms. Scheuring will remain under oath until the hearing adjourns.

17. 142 Elm St., Gladys Castillo, owner, 14 Timothy Leo Ct, Fleetwood PA, Purchased Jan 2025

Ms. Mayfield stated that the property owner is not present, but representatives from the neighboring property are present and they wish to testify.

Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Scott W. Butler, II.

Ms. Scheuring screenshared photographs of the property, she entered the following conditions into the record from the property summary sheet and the property packet into the record as follows:

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class mail on May 5, 2025 and posted on May 6, 2025
- Delinquent water charges - N/A, Water on
- Delinquent taxes – N/A
- Gas service N/A
- Electric service N/A
- Trades – N/A
- Property Maintenance – 3 NoV, 2017, \$1200 unpaid, 2 QoL Weeds

Note: delinquent Water includes sewer, trash, and recycling

Public Comment

Mr. Butler stated that his grandmother lives in the adjoining property and stated that he has been assisting his grandmother with property improvements. He noted that the lack of maintenance at 142 Elm St is we second story and he added that roof damage at 142 Elm St is causing water to enter his grandmother’s home. He stated that this property has changed hands several times across multiple years and the property remains vacant without any rehabilitation. He estimated that the property has been vacant for 17 years.

Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Scott Wynton Butler, I.

Mr. Butler stated that his mother’s address is 140 Elm St and he agreed that the property has been vacant for 17-20 years. He stated that his father passed away in February 2025 and his son has stepped up to assist his mother. He stated that there is extensive damage at the rear of 142 Elm Street and he encouraged the BPRC to move this property forward through the BPRC process which may encourage other property owners to make improvements to their properties.

Ms. Woodward moved, seconded by Mr. Miller, to determine 142 Elm as a blighted property. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Miller stated that this property is a classic example of how one unmaintained property can cause the entire neighborhood to deteriorate.

26. 835 Muhlenberg St., Marisol A Lora Mendez, owner, 340 S 6th St Rdg, Purchased March 2023

Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Ms. Mendez.

Ms. Schuering displayed current photos of both properties and entered the following conditions into the record from the property summary sheet:

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class mail on May 5, 2025 and posted on May 6, 2025
- Delinquent water charges \$13944.94, Water off 2010
- Delinquent taxes \$917.52 2023-24 City, County, School
- Gas service N/A
- Electric service N/A
- Trades – N/A
- Property Maintenance – 11 work orders, failed inspection 2023, Placard unlawful 2017, \$26502.89 unpaid, 10 QoL Trash, 26 QoL Weeds, 1 QoL Ice, QoL Indoor furn outdoors

Ms. Mendez stated that she was unaware of the water and Property Maintenance delinquencies. She stated that the title transferred without the standard title search. She stated that she will contact RAWA to start a payment plan. She noted that the last inspection did not occur due to the death of her mother.

Ms. Scheuring stated that the delinquency from Property Maintenance has been accruing for many years. She asked Ms. Mendez to call her to determine the amount due since Ms. Mendez took ownership. She added that the building permits approved in 2023 have expired.

Ms. Mendez agreed to apply for new building permits and added that the property is zoned for a 2-unit rental.

Ms. Scheuring agreed, noting that the property failed its inspection in July 2024.

Public Comment

None.

Mr. Miller moved, seconded by Ms. Woodward, to table 835 Muhlenberg St until the October 2025 Determination hearing. The motion carried unanimously.

9. 355 N 8th St., 355 N 8th St LLC, owner, 355 N 8th St, Reading, Purchased July 2018

Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Mr. Aradia.

Ms. Schuering displayed current photos of the property and entered the following conditions into the record from the property summary sheet:

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class mail on May 5, 2025 and posted on May 7, 2025
- Delinquent water charges \$3665.85, Water on
- Delinquent taxes \$11268.39 2022-24 City, County, School
- Gas service N/A
- Electric service N/A
- Trades – N/A
- Property Maintenance – Failed Inspection Aug 2023, 3 work orders, 2 NoV, \$7055 unpaid, 9 QoL Trash, 9 QoL Weeds, 1 QoL Ice and 1 QoL Motor vehicle nuisance *Note: delinquent Water includes sewer, trash, and recycling*

Mr. Aradia stated that he purchased the property in 2018 to convert to a barbershop. He stated that he is currently an international barber and he regularly travels to other states and cities. He stated that he hired a contractor and provided a downpayment of \$50,000 and after completing some work, the contractor vanished. He stated that similar situations occurred a few more times at a cost of \$200,000 and he recently found someone more responsible and responsive. He stated that the longer the conversion takes, the more money it is costing him. He stated that he has paid to fix the roof three times but he recently learned that the wood under the roof requires replacement.

In response to a question from Ms. Woodward, Mr. Aradia stated that he was advised against taking legal action against the contractors who scammed him because they are uninsured and own no assets that could be used to reimburse the money he lost.

In response to a question from Mr. Miller, Mr. Aradia stated that he is now upside-down at the property and he purchased an additional property to help finance the completion of the barbershop. He added that he is now under contract with a more responsible company.

Ms. Scheuring stated that no building permits have been issued.

Public Comment

None.

Mr. Miller moved, seconded by Ms. Woodward, to table 355 N 8th Street until the October Determination hearing, conditioned upon the issuance of building permits within 30 days and an inspection within 60 days. when alternatives can be considered. The motion was approved unanimously.

1039 Buttonwood St., Josh Paravati , owner, 1039 Buttonwood St Rdg, Purchased Jan 2022

Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Mr. Paracino, the property owner's father-in-law.

Ms. Schuering displayed current photos of the property and entered the property packet into the record as follows:

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class mail on May 5, 2025 and posted on May 7, 2025
- Delinquent water charges \$4129.26, water service off 2013
- Delinquent taxes N/A
- Gas service N/A
- Electric service N/A
- Trades – N/A
- Property Maintenance – 1 work orders, 2 NoV, Placard unlawful 2016, \$10007.50 unpaid, 2 QoL Trash, 1 QoL Weeds

Note: delinquent Water includes sewer, trash, and recycling

Mr. Paracino stated that his son-in-law purchased the property for his family at auction and he made exterior improvements; however, he was quite surprised when he saw the poor condition of the interior noting the lack of copper piping and an electric system. He stated that he owns numerous rental properties, and he has stepped in to take over the rehab of this property. He stated that his son-in-law intends to reside at the property with his daughter and their child. He noted that he has not pulled building/trade permits. He estimated that he can have the rehab completed within 6-9 months.

Public Comment

None

Ms. Woodward moved, seconded by Mr. Boyd, to table 1039 Buttonwood Street until the October Determination hearing, conditioned upon an inspection within 30 days. The motion carried unanimously.

18. 600 S 9th St., 600 S 9th St LLC, owner, 477 Colonial Rd Ridgewood NJ, Purchased Nov 2021

Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Mr. Collins.

Ms. Schuering displayed current photos of the property and entered the property packet into the record as follows:

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class mail on May 5, 2025 and posted on May 6, 2025
- Delinquent water charges \$15480.60, water service off 2024
- Delinquent taxes \$7991.20 2024 City County School
- Gas service N/A

- Electric service N/A
 - Trades – N/A
 - Property Maintenance – 3 NoV, Failed inspection 2020, 1 QoL Trash, 1 QoL Weeds
- Note: delinquent Water includes sewer, trash, and recycling*

Mr. Collins stated that the EPA has completed the remediation at this property. He stated that prior to acquiring the property he gave money to the former owner to paydown the water and tax bills. He noted his intent to enter into a payment plan to eliminate both delinquencies. He stated that he plans to apply for building permits and he has zoning to use a portion of the property, apart from the remaining structure that is structurally sound, for a warehouse. He stated that he has retained a demo company to demolish a portion of the building and clear all debris. He stated that he has installed temporary electric service and security cameras to reduce dumping.

Mr. Collins stated that the City performed the demolition and the City also installed the fencing surrounding the property.

Ms. Scheuring stated that the City's database does not show the filing of a lien for the cost of the demolition.

In response to a question from Mr. Boyd, Mr. Collins stated that the middle portion of the building is structurally secure. The warehouse will go in the middle section and the other portions will be demolished. He stated that he intends to request a demo permit from zoning.

Public Comment

None

Mr. Miller moved, seconded by Ms. Woodward, to determine 600 South 9th Street as blighted. The motion carried unanimously.

13. 1853 N 3rd St., Anoread LLC & Berks County Industrial Development Authority, owner, 633 Court St 14th Flr, Reading, Purchased Feb 2023

Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Mr. Zaborowski.

Ms. Schuering displayed current photos of the property and entered the property packet into the record as follows:

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class mail on May 5, 2025.
- Delinquent water charges - No Service
- Delinquent taxes N/A

- Gas service N/A
- Electric service N/A
- Trades – N/A
- Property Maintenance – 12 NoV, 2 Work Orders, Passed inspection 2017, \$195 unpaid, 2 QoL Trash, 15 QoL Weeds

Note: delinquent Water includes sewer, trash, and recycling

Mr. Zaborowski stated that he is the Executive Director of the Berks IDA and he distributed a document outlining the plan for the former Glidden's property. He stated that the IDA is working to acquire the property and also working with the DEP on environmental remediation that will allow the commercial reuse of this 14-acre property. He stated that the railroad tracks divide the property into two parts – the large portion will be for retail and the smaller portion will be manufacturing. He predicted that the retail portion will be under construction in 2026 and it should be completed within a 4-year period. He stated that he will repair the fencing and have the property maintained.

Public Comment

None

Mr. Miller moved, seconded by Ms. Woodward, to release 1853 N 3rd Street from the process. The motion carried unanimously.

16. 316 N 2nd St., MVP Management Services LLC, owner, 316 N 2nd St Reading PA, Purchased March 2025

Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Ms. Jans, the sister of the owner of MVP Management Services LLC.

Ms. Schuering displayed current photos of the property and entered the property packet into the record as follows:

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class mail on May 5, 2025 and posted on May 6, 2025
- Delinquent water charges \$8304.47, water service on
- Delinquent taxes \$195.35 2024 School
- Gas service N/A
- Electric service N/A
- Trades – N/A
- Property Maintenance – 1 QoL Indoor furn outdoors, \$935 unpaid

Note: delinquent Water includes sewer, trash, and recycling

Ms. Jans stated that they have rehabbed the property and have started making payments to

RAWA. She stated that they were unaware that the delinquent water balance transferred with the property. She stated that they are also working to clear the tax delinquency. She added that they have obtained a business license and they plan to seek zoning to convert this property into multiple rental units.

Ms. Scheuring stated that the building permits expire in November and that an inspection is scheduled for June 17th.

Public Comment

None

Mr. Boyd moved, seconded by Ms. Woodward, to remove 316 N 2nd St. from the process. The motion carried unanimously.

7. 216 Buttonwood St., Dung Phan, owner, 2525 Cromwell Dr, Wyomissing PA, Purchased Sept 2019

Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Ms. Avido, who stated that she has a lease to own agreement with Mr. Phan. She stated that she and her boyfriend took over responsibility for the property in 2024, but the title has not transferred to them. She expressed the belief that they are the equitable owners.

Ms. Schuering displayed current photos of the property and entered the property packet into the record as follows:

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class mail on May 5, 2025.
- Delinquent water charges \$72513.34 water service off 2013
- Delinquent taxes \$21155.51 2018-24 City County School
- Gas service N/A
- Electric service N/A
- Trades – N/A
- Property Maintenance – 11 NoV, \$370 unpaid, 5 QoL Trash, 2 QoL Weeds, 3 Motor Vehicle Nuisance

Note: delinquent Water includes sewer, trash, and recycling

Ms. Avido stated that her boyfriend is a contractor and they plan to renovate the building to provide office space for each of their businesses. She stated that they are working to upgrade the sprinkler system so it meets code requirements and added that they are aware of the need to go through the small land development process. She stated that long-term, the building will be completely commercial. She noted the problem with dumping and neighbors using the lot for parking. She stated that they are working to install fencing to secure the property. She stated that Mr. Phan refused to attend this hearing. She stated that she is unsure why Mr.

Phan did not pay down the water and tax delinquencies with the money they provided to him for that purpose.

Mr. Keith noted that contingencies or conditions cannot be binding on Ms. Avido and her boyfriend, as they do not have title to the property.

Public Comment

None

Mr. Miller moved, seconded by Ms. Woodward, to determine 216 Buttonwood Street as blighted. The motion carried unanimously.

11. 735 McIlvain St., Prince Wikim Lollis, owner, 735 McIlvain St Reading PA, Purchased Jan 2025

Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Mr. Lollis.

Ms. Schuering displayed current photos of the property and entered the property packet into the record as follows:

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class mail on May 5, 2025 and posted on May 6, 2025.
- Delinquent water charges \$5205.92 water service on/off not listed
- Delinquent taxes \$2365.15 2023-24 City County School
- Gas service N/A
- Electric service N/A
- Trades – N/A
- Property Maintenance – Placard unlawful 2016, \$28070 unpaid, 4 QoL Trash, 1 QoL Indoor furn outdoors

Note: delinquent Water includes sewer, trash, and recycling

Mr. Lollis stated that he is working on the property, preparing to apply for building permits and making water and tax payments. He stated that he has identified a single mother to relocate to the property with her child.

Ms. Scheuring stated that the property is scheduled for a routine inspection on June 24th.

Public Comment

None

Ms. Woodward moved, seconded by Mr. Miller, to table 735 McIlvain Street until the October Determination Hearing, conditioned upon the preparation of a rehab plan. The

motion carried unanimously.

20. 1145 Locust St., Walter G Hotzman & Rachelle F Hotzman, owner, 239 Melrose Ave Reading, Purchased Nov 1999

Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Mr. Hotzman.

Ms. Schuering displayed current photos of the property and entered the property packet into the record as follows:

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class mail on May 5, 2025 and posted on May 7, 2025
- Delinquent water charges \$7929.84, water service off
- Delinquent taxes \$4421.46 2023-24 City County School
- Gas service N/A
- Electric service N/A
- Trades – N/A
- Property Maintenance – 2 NoV, Failed inspection 2022, \$2800 unpaid, 7 QoL Trash, 2 QoL Weeds

Note: delinquent Water includes sewer, trash, and recycling

In the Chat feature, Mr. Hotzman wrote that he has rehabbed the property and he lives there.

Mr. Hotzman had technical difficulties using the audio – he could hear what was being said to him but he could not respond. Ms. Kelleher called him on her cell phone to enable him to testify.

Via speaker phone, Mr. Hotzman stated that he has been speaking with Property Maintenance Inspector Rosario about what is needed to eliminate the violations at the property. He stated that he resides at a Reading zip code, that is outside Reading's boundaries. He stated that he wants to rehab the property and sell it so he can retire. He stated that he has disclosed his plans to those in this block of Locust St. He stated that the copper piping was stolen and he is trying to secure the property.

Mr. Hotzman stated that he intends to rehab the property and sell it, rather than renting it out.

Ms. Scheuring stated that the property is scheduled for a routine inspection on July 29th.

Public Comment

None

Ms. Woodward moved, seconded by Mr. Boyd, to determine 1145 Locust Street as a blighted property. The motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda

Ms. Mayfield stated that the listing of properties below have no owner representation and they meet at least one of the 12 blighted property criteria. *(Note the numbers match those on the Property Summary Sheets).*

Notices were mailed to all properties on May 5, 2025 and posted on the property on either May 6th, 7th or 13th if required.

- 1. 740 Franklin St, Cargo Group of America LLC, owner, PO Box 346 152 S Franklin St Wilkesbarre PA 18703, purchased Feb 2025** - Delinquent water charges No Account; Delinquent taxes N/A; Property Maintenance 2 NoV, Passed inspection 6/2024, \$910 unpaid, 1 QoL Indoor furn outdoors
- 2. 742 Franklin St., Cargo Group of America LLC, owner, PO Box 346 152 S Franklin St Wilkesbarre PA 18703, purchased Feb 2025** - Delinquent water charges No Account; Delinquent taxes N/A; Property Maintenance Failed inspection 11/2016, \$1435 unpaid, 1 QoL Weeds, 1 QoL Motor vehicle nuisance, 1 QoL Indoor furn outdoors
- 3. 744 Franklin St., Cargo Group of America LLC, owner, PO Box 346 152 S Franklin St Wilkesbarre PA 18703, purchased Feb 2025** - Delinquent water charges \$746.85, Water off 2015; Delinquent taxes N/A; Property Maintenance – Failed inspection 8/2017, 2 work orders, 3 NoV, 5 QoL Trash, 3 QoL Weeds
- 4. 211 N 4th St, Desta Erstie, owner, 2565 124th St FL 2 Flushing NY 11354-1124, Purchased Jan 2019** - Delinquent water charges \$169.46, Water on; Delinquent taxes N/A; Property Maintenance – 2 NoV, Failed inspection 10/2022, \$985 unpaid
- 6. 806 N 3rd St., Amadou Diakite, owner, 267 Edgecombe Ave, Apt 51, NY NY, Purchased Sept 2005** - Delinquent water charges \$216544.71, Water off 2019; Delinquent taxes \$3917.26 2024 City County School; Property Maintenance – 1 work order, 15 NoV, Failed inspection 8/2019, \$15745.76 unpaid, 20 QoL Trash, 16 QoL Weeds, 6 QoL indoor furn outdoors
- 10. 310 Heckman Ct., Donna Conrad & Christopher Geraldo Burgos, owners, 3013 Valentine Ave Apt 1E Bronx NY, Purchased Jan 2025** – Delinquent water charges N/A Water on; Delinquent Taxes N/A, Property Maintenance – Failed inspection 2/2018, 1 NoV, 3 work order, \$1771.32 unpaid, 8 QoL Trash, 3 QoL Weeds, 1 QoL Indoor furn outdoors
- 12. 115 N 9th St., Tejada Domingo, owner, 237 S 5th St. Reading, Purchased May 2004** – Delinquent water charges \$110.55 Water Service off 2015; Delinquent Taxes N/A, Property

Maintenance – Failed inspection 2014, 5 NoV, \$4759.87 unpaid, 1 QoL Trash, 1 QoL Motor vehicle nuisance

14. 423 Tulpehocken St., Habitat For Humanity of Berks, owner, PO Box 664 Adamstown PA, Purchased Sept 2024 – Delinquent water charges \$159.57 Water off 2022; Delinquent Taxes N/A, Property Maintenance 7 NoV, \$1750 unpaid, 4 QoL Trash, 1 QoL Weeds, 3 QoL Indoor furn outdoors

15. 315 Moss St., Alex R Madrigal Morera and Maria Baez, owner, 616 Muhlenberg St Reading PA, Purchased Feb 2024 - Delinquent water charges \$3575.41 Water off 2006; Delinquent Taxes N/A, Property Maintenance Failed inspection 2022, \$947.74 unpaid, 1 QoL Trash, 1 QoL Weeds

19. 730 Bingaman St., Dominguz Real Estate Holdings LLC, owner, 342 N 4th St Reading, Purchased Dec 2024 - Delinquent water charges \$170.77 Water on; Delinquent Taxes N/A, Property Maintenance Passed inspection 4/2025, 3 NoV, \$4942.56 unpaid

21. 308 Hollenbach St., Enohenghevbe Washington, owner, 503 Governor Dr Reading PA, Purchased Nov 2023 - Delinquent water charges N/A Water service abandoned; Delinquent Taxes \$205.83 2024 County School, Property Maintenance Failed inspection 5/2024, 5 NoV, 2 work order, \$2816.50 unpaid, 15 QoL Trash, 9 QoL Weeds, 5 QoL Indoor furn outdoors

22. 315 S 6th St., 316 S 6th St LLC, owner, 315 S 6th St Reading PA, Purchased Jan 2023 - Delinquent water charges \$10768.42 Water off 2018; Delinquent Taxes N/A, Property Maintenance Placard unsafe 2017, Failed inspection 2022, 13 NoV, \$7340 unpaid, 6 QoL Trash, 2 QoL Weeds

24. 536 Johnson St., Jose Turja , owner, 1440 Monroe St Rdg, Purchased July 2022- Delinquent water charges No Account; Delinquent Taxes N/A, Property Maintenance Failed inspection 2013, 3 NoV, \$1360 unpaid, 1 QoL Trash, 1 QoL Weeds

25. 622 Pine St., Juan A Solis, owner, 622 Pine St Rdg, Purchased June 2024 - Delinquent water charges \$2442.99 Water off 2012; Delinquent Taxes N/A, Property Maintenance Placard unlawful 2012, 5 NoV, \$585 unpaid, 1 QoL Trash, 2 QoL Weeds, 1 QoL Motor vehicle nuisance

27. 626 Schuylkill Ave., Humberto Castaneda Diaz , owner, 713 Wiltseys Mill Rd, Hammonton NJ Purchased Dec 2001 – Delinquent water charges \$10655.11 Water off 2013; Delinquent Taxes 637.51 2024 City County School, Property Maintenance – Placard unsafe 2014, 2 NoV, 1 work order, \$3870 unpaid, 3 QoL Trash, 9 QoL Weeds, 1 QoL Ice

Public Comment

None.

Mr. Miller moved, seconded by Ms. Woodward, to determine the consent agenda properties as blighted. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Keith announced that the certification hearing will be held on Thursday, August 7, 2025 at 6 pm and the work session is scheduled for Wednesday, July 29, 2025 at 6 pm. Both will be conducted hybrid – in-person and Zoom.

Ms. Scheuring and Ms. Mayfield noted the need to vote to approve the new hearing notice. Ms. Scheuring stated that the grammatical errors were corrected.

Ms. Kelleher inquired if the new notice will be mailed and posted on the property. Ms. Scheuring stated that it would.

Ms. Kelleher suggested altering the appearance to make it more eye-catching. Ms. Scheuring suggested posting the current notice on the property and mailing the new notice.

Ms. Kelleher stated that the notice says that some criteria qualifying the property for the process will be included with the notice and she questioned what criteria will be included.

Ms. Mayfield suggested defining the criteria for the notice at the next work session.

The hearing adjourned on motion of Mr. Keith and Mr. Miller at approximately 8:30 pm.

*Respectfully submitted by
Linda A. Kelleher CMC,
Secretary*